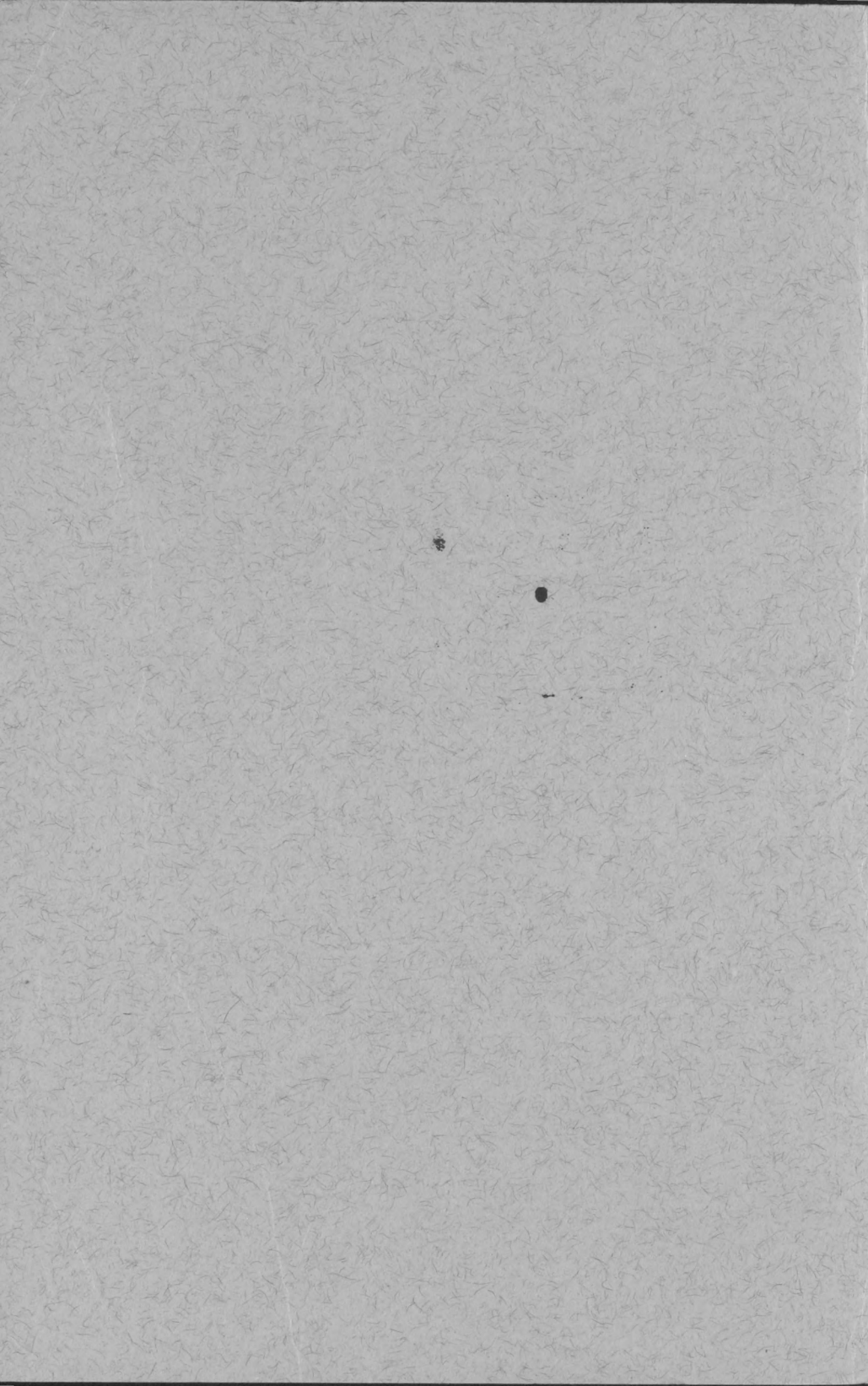


CARSELAND
UNITED CHURCH
50th
ANNIVERSARY
1914-1964



1914

ESTABLISHMENT AND GROWTH

1964

CARSELAND UNITED CHURCH

The pioneer settlers who came to the district now known as the Carseland district in 1907, 1908 and 1909 from well settled districts in Eastern Canada and the United States, where a church had been a part of their way of life, desired to establish a similar pattern in their new surroundings. Services by student ministers were held at different homes during the summer months. Always in the minds of these people was the dream to establish a "Church of their own."

The first Ladies Aid was organized at the home of Mrs. Berquist on May 6, 1910 with Mrs. Addeman as president. It was decided at this meeting that each member should pay a regular fee of twenty-five cents per month, to be used in purchasing material for the use of the society; the balance to be reserved as a fund towards erecting a church building. This organization was designated as the "Bow-Valley Ladies Aid Society" with an enrollment of nine members. By June 1911 membership had grown to eighteen, and it was unanimously agreed by all that the reserve fund of twenty-five dollars be donated towards a Sunday School organ fund. However, in September it was decided to present this same twenty-five dollars to the minister, Mr. Hipkin, as a slight token of appreciation of his labors in this vicinity.

During this time a number of people met at the Horse Track School located near where the Cool home is now, and organized the first Sunday School, electing Mr. G.C. Melendy as superintendent.

This Sunday School Service was held for a time then later moved to the Griesbach store building one mile south of what is now the town of Carseland. Church services were held here also by students in the ministry, including Mr. Hipkin and Mr. Fairweather. In 1914 a student supply in Strangmuir school house, north-east of Carseland. Through Mr. Coates' influence and assistance a definite plan was made and funds collected to build a church. This building was erected in the new town of Carseland and dedicated in the fall of 1914.

Mr. Piper a student was the first resident minister and served until July 1915 when Rev. L. R. McDonald, our first ordained minister, was sent by Conference to serve Blind Creek, Dalemead and Carseland. Reverend McDonald was a man of steadfast purpose and laid a firm foundation for a church group before moving on to another field in 1919.

The first Church Board members were the following: Mr. F. Addeman, Mr. Field, Mr. O. Moorehouse, Mr. Moore, Mr. Robinson and Mr. G.C. Melendy.

In 1919 Reverend Lund came for one year, followed by Reverend Cook for two years, and in 1922 Rev. T. Lonsdale took over -- a lone bachelor -- but not for long. The next winter he brought his bride to our community.

In these days the Church was quite the "Community Centre", and the Ladies Aid held many successful entertainments and suppers. Mr. and Mrs. Lonsdale had a special aptitude for entertainments and many enjoyable amateur programs were produced under their direction. These years were a part of our most successful period. People still clung to the community for social life, and the Church

had not yet been by-passed for more exciting diversions. Reverend and Mrs. Lonsdale had a special interest in the 'young people' of the district -- who are the 'older ones' now. It is not likely those who attended Trail Rangers, Tuxis, and C.G.I.T. have forgotten the good times shared by all at the meetings and camps. As much as we appreciated 'the Lonsdales' it seemed that others had recognized their capabilities, and in 1925 they accepted a call to Banff. All regretfully bade them farewell, as they departed for their lovely new location, where they have dwelt ever since.

Reverend Johnson and his wife came in 1925, but due to failing health, returned to their old home in Nova Scotia in 1927.

The 'Longmires' arrived in 1927 when prosperous years were with us, and it was smoother sailing from a financial standpoint. At this time, hopes for a much needed new manse, became a reality, under Reverend Longmire's capable direction and personal labor. Reverend and Mrs. Longmire conducted a girls' camp for teen-age girls for two weeks each summer. They also helped stage many successful home talent plays. The annual Sports Day held by the Carseland, Dalemead, and Blind Creek churches at the Bow River picnic grounds was very popular in these years.

But now a dark cloud was rolling up on the horizon. The depression followed by drought became a bitter factor in prairie life. The bitterness of the people was reflected in their attitude towards the Church and great difficulty was experienced in meeting the necessary expenses. In 1933, after five years of sincere service and successful accomplishments the Longmires moved to Crossfield.

In the midst of the depression Reverend and Mrs. Forster and their family of boys came to help keep the wheels turning. They, with their quiet, cheerful manner and good music, provided a bright spot in these dark days. However, nothing less than a miracle man could have injected much life into the church at this time.

The first wedding held in the new Carseland church was in 1934 -- Bob Groves and Laura Kennaugh.

In 1937 as the time drew near for the 'Forsters' to leave, everyone began to realize how much their cheerful presence would be missed in the community. The three-points expressed their appreciation of the hard years experienced by Reverend and Mrs. Forster by holding a farewell picnic in their honour. The large attendance was a real tribute to their years of devotion, duty and courage, in the face of great discouragement.

Reverend Forster was followed by Reverend McKelvie and then Reverend Clegg, both of whom struggled to keep the church alive despite small attendances and financial difficulties.

Reverend Seiber and family joined us and stirred the smoldering embers, and a new flame of interest shot forth. These were trying times for our minister and his family. While here, Mrs. Seiber passed away, and our minister continued to lead his flock patiently, in spite of his own sorrowing days. Reverend Seiber was truly a man with a green thumb. The yard at the manse glowed with luscious growth of shrubs and flowers. When you looked upon it you couldn't help but recall the verse, "One is nearer to God in a garden than anywhere else on earth."

Reverend and Mrs. Hunt came in 1946 from an active church in Strathmore to find many difficulties.

He was given three other points to minister to twice a month. The pressures and demands on a man serving six districts must have been many. Reverend and Mrs. Hunt gave generously of their time, with Mrs. Hunt accompanying him to lead in the musical activities.

In 1948 after Reverend Hunt left, we were ministered to one Sunday by Reverend Pike. He had been offered a charge in B. C. after accepting Carseland, and wished to go to that point.

The following two years we were served by a student, Len McArthur, from Calgary, who at this time was attending Mount Royal College. Again, with the persistent drive of youth, and one not easily discouraged, Len flamed the embers of church spirit. The young people became interested and were loyal in church attendance. Len McArthur's week-ends were spent with the young people in the district, and he inspired a definite interest to give the church building a face-lifting. The struggles of past years were showing on its interior, with broken plaster, and smoked walls. Many will recall listening to a sermon, as they sat grouped around the old coal heater -- one side of you cooking while the other side shivered. These were the same days, that winds caused the old heater to smoke; making it difficult to see the minister at the front of the church. A building committee was appointed, and with Len working with them, the plans moved into action. The interior was covered with a ten-test material, and two small rooms were built on either side of the chancel. At this time Calgary Power was installed for the enjoyment of all. Everyone gave generously of his time, and we were indeed happy with the results of all the efforts.

Mr. N. R. Jackson with his wife Freida, and two daughters Lynne and Wilma, came to us as a lay supply minister from Calgary, where "Bert" had been pastor of a Pentecostal Church. Mr. and Mrs. Jackson awakened a spiritual growth throughout the charge, by their visitation work, and a genuine interest in all of the people of the district. Mr. Jackson's excellent sermons and Bible Study Classes held in Dalemead were an inspiration to all who attended, and through his ministry a number of new members were welcomed into the church. Mrs. Jackson was active in the W. A., girls' clubs, choir work, and Sunday School, and produced Christmas concerts that were enjoyed by all. After a six-year ministry here, we regretfully said good-bye, when they left to minister at Hobbema, where Mr. Jackson would have work among the Indians.

Reverend and Mrs. R.B. Gibson came to Carseland in September, 1956. We were so fortunate to have his years of experience and his wonderful Scottish wit. Under his able guidance the Sunday School room was built, by the local community men. The following year memorial pews and a new floor runner were donated by some of our local members, and many of the older ones who had since moved away. Mrs. Gibson taught pre-school Sunday School and was president of the W.A. Besides these she very capably lead the Tyro boys' club, and Explorer girls' group, both of which were very successful. Everyone agreed we lost a lot when the Gibsons retired and moved to White Rock, B.C.

Mr. and Mrs. Roy Smith and family came in August of 1960. He resumed his studies the following September, but still found time for visitations. Under his guidance the Explorer

and C.G.I.T. groups were started, as well as a junior girls choir. In the fall of 1962 he took up his new duties at Vauxhall.

Mr. and Mrs. Joe Robson and family of four boys, John, Bob, Ricky and Howard, came to Carseland in August, 1962, from the Youngstown charge. A fifth son, Glen Martin, was born in March, 1963. In his first year Mr. Robson completed his grade twelve at the Carseland High School. Besides his studies, he was active in choir work at all three charges. He also sponsored official visitations by church members during the annual canvas. The success of this project resulted in Carseland charge becoming self-supporting in 1964. During his second year here, Mr. Robson attended Mount Royal College. Mrs. Robson and the family are active in the community, with Mrs. Robson particularly active in the Home and School Association, and the U.C.W. She accepted the position of president of the Home and School for the 1954-65 term. During the summer she capably manages the vacation Bible School. We are pleased that the Robsons plan on staying at the Carseland charge for another year.

During most of this time Carseland charge has been an "Aid-Receiving Charge," receiving financial aid from the Board of Home Missions for ministerial support. The Superintendent of our Board of Home Missions through these many years has been Rev. Dwight Powell whose patient and co-operative attitude has guided Calgary Presbytery to realize and grant Carseland charge their many requests. As Supervisor, Reverend Powell has been our guest speaker on several occasions, all of which were enjoyed by the congregation, especially his "children's stories." After 50 years of being supervised by Home

Missions, Carseland Charge is happy to become self-supporting the year of their church building's 50th anniversary. At this same time we are no longer a part of Calgary Presbytery, but are under the guidance of the new Foothills Presbytery, which includes the suburban charges around Calgary. Regardless of the many changes taking place, we hope to still maintain a close contact with Reverend Powell.

No chronicle of the life of this church would be complete without a word of tribute to the loyal and devoted members of the congregation who over the past fifty years have attended this church. They never thought the struggle to keep the church open was hopeless, and their faith has been justified by the realization of the celebration of its fiftieth anniversary.

It would be difficult -- indeed impossible -- to list all the individuals who have worked to achieve what has been done. A church is not merely an edifice, nor an institution, nor a collection of organizations, but a band of dedicated people "looking outward in the same direction." If the names of all the members of the past Official Board, the Session, the Board of Trustees, the executives of the Women's organizations, the Sunday School officers, -- if all these were listed, there would still be loyal and consecrated workers omitted; like women who have stood all day in a hot kitchen baking for a church supper, or who have sat for hours at sewing machines or quilting frames to provide funds to maintain a church for the community. To single out some would mean to neglect others equally worthy. It would seem best that in the service of Christ and His Church we should be content with a blessed anonymity.

A word of appreciation must be expressed to those many members of the Anglican Church, who lacking a church building in this district, have walked along with us for many years. They have shown a fine spirit of co-operation in our many ventures as well as in the establishment of the church building itself.

Finally, after fifty years of struggles, the Carseland charge has taken a forward step to become self-supporting. It has taken careful administration and a periodical "nudging" of the congregation (and indeed what congregation does not need a periodical nudging lest they "grow weary of well-doing"?) to achieve this goal. So today, it is to our young people we look to carry on this church started so many years ago. It is a monument to the hopes and plans of those people of 1914. We hope you will preserve, improve and cherish it, and will always have a "Church of your own."

On June 14th, 1964, at 3:00 p.m. another milestone of the Carseland United Church was reached when approximately 200 people filled the church to capacity with the overflow in the Sunday School rooms. The 50th Anniversary of the church building commenced with a worship service, Rev. D. K. Walker of St. Matthews United Church, Calgary, was guest speaker. The two soloists were Mrs. George McElroy of Chestermere Lake district and Mr. Noel Barlow of Carseland. Mrs. McElroy, who was also one of the two soloists 50 years ago at the time of dedication, very capably sang "Life's Lullaby." Noel, of the Anglican congregation, which at one time used the church, and therefore became very much a part of the church history, sang "Bless This House."

At 5:00 p.m. the congregation sat down to a full course dinner in the community hall, which was suitably decorated in keeping with the Golden Anniversary. Reverend Whitmore, also of St. Matthews asked the blessing. Following the dinner Myrna Downey and her two daughters, Colleen and Lori, along with Harry Christensen and his son, Barry, thrilled those present with four very appropriate songs which included "How Great 'Thou Art" and "The Place Where I Worship."

Ivy Podmaroff and John Paris read the church history, and each minister present rose and spoke when his name was mentioned. During this time letters of congratulation from former ministers who were unable to attend were read by Mrs. Robson. A letter from Reverend Coates of Washington, who was a student minister at the time of the dedication service, enlightened the present congregation on many past details. Letters of regret for being unable to be present were read from Reverend Lonsdale, Reverend McArthur, and Reverend Gibson. In place of Reverend Forster, who has since passed away, were his two sons and their families. Arthur Forster spoke on behalf of his father, which was very much appreciated. It was plain to all that Art had inherited his father's humorous qualities.

Milton Moorehouse, whose parents were active in establishing the church building, flew from Montreal to be with us for the occasion. Milton found it easy to reminisce fully on his church life in Carseland, at this time. Unfortunately, only two former ministers were able to attend, Reverend and Mrs. S. Hunt, and Mr. and Mrs. N. Jackson. Rev. C. D. Powell, D.D., from the Board of Home Missions congratulated the church on becoming self-supporting this year. Wilbur Melendy presented small gifts of appreciation to Mrs. McElroy, Dr. Powell, and our young people who were so helpful during the dinner hour. Reverend Hunt extended a sincere thank you on behalf of all present to those who gave freely of their time and energy, and closed the celebration with a prayer.

Many of those who were present were old timers now retired and moved away, and those who were children at the dedication service and have since settled in other districts. It was indeed a pleasure to look around and recognize faces and see friends chatting together who had not seen each other for years. It was the presence of these people that made the day a success, and one to be remembered.

We were pleased to note that of the original Church Board consisting of six members, all of whom have since passed away, all but one was represented by members of their families -- sons, daughters, grand children and great-grandchildren. These are the things that are responsible for the closeness of the congregation in a small church. As the day drew to a close we were conscious of things left undone, but we also realized how important it is to keep our church doors open. We pray that many who worshiped together this 14th day of June, 1964, will join together to make the Carseland United Church 100th Anniversary just as successful.



